

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for reducing mitral regurgitation, the apparatus comprising:

a bendable elongated body configured to be inserted into the coronary sinus of a patient in the vicinity of the posterior leaflet of the mitral valve, said elongated body comprising a rigid distal end section and a rigid proximal end section, said elongated body forming a longitudinal axis between said distal end section and said proximal end section, said elongated body being reconfigurable lengthwise from a first configuration for delivery into the coronary sinus to a second contracted configuration lengthwise for exerting a force onto the posterior annulus; wherein

said distal end section comprises a distal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped rigid tube having a plurality of proximally-extending barbs disposed within a length of said distal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue;

said proximal end section comprises a proximal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped rigid tube having a plurality of distally-extending barbs disposed within a length of said proximal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue; and

at least one intermediate spring segment connecting said distal end section to said proximal end section, said at least one spring segment configured in an extended state to provide a first length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the first configuration and configured in a

contracted state to provide a second length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the second configuration, the second length being shorter than the first length, wherein said elongated body is reconfigured from the first configuration to the contracted second configuration so as to urge said distal end section and said proximal end section toward one another;

whereby when said elongated body is inserted into the coronary sinus in the first configuration, said at least one spring segment contracts lengthwise to reconfigure said elongated body to assume the second configuration so as to exert the force on the posterior annulus and thereby reduce mitral regurgitation.

2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein the at least one spring segment comprises an elastic material, and further wherein said elastic material is stretched when said elongated body is in the first configuration and said elastic material is relaxed when said elongated body is in the second configuration.

3. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said at least one spring segment comprises a shape memory alloy, and further wherein a temperature transition is used to reconfigure said elongated body from the first configuration to the second configuration.

4. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein there are at least two intermediate spring segments connecting said distal end section to said proximal end section, and further wherein an intermediate hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped tube section is disposed between said at least two spring segments.

5. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to claim 4 wherein said intermediate hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped tube section has at least one barb thereon.

6.-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing mitral regurgitation, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a prosthesis comprising:

a bendable elongated body configured to be inserted into the coronary sinus of a patient in the vicinity of the posterior leaflet of the mitral valve, said elongated body comprising a rigid distal end section and a rigid proximal end section, said elongated body forming a longitudinal axis between said distal end section and said proximal end section, said elongated body being reconfigurable lengthwise from a first configuration for delivery into the coronary sinus to a second contracted configuration lengthwise for exerting a force onto the posterior annulus; wherein

said distal end section comprises a distal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped rigid tube having a plurality of

proximally-extending barbs disposed within a length of said distal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue;

said proximal end section comprises a proximal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped rigid tube having a plurality of distally-extending barbs disposed within a length of said proximal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue; and

at least one intermediate spring segment connecting said distal end section to said proximal end section, said at least one spring segment configured in an extended state to provide a first length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the first configuration and configured in a contracted state to provide a second length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the second configuration, the second length being shorter than the first length, wherein said elongated body is reconfigured from the first configuration to the second configuration so as to urge said distal end section and said proximal end section toward one another;

whereby when said elongated body is inserted into the coronary sinus in the first configuration, said at least one spring segment contracts lengthwise to reconfigure said elongated body to assume the second configuration so as to exert the force on the posterior annulus and thereby reduce mitral regurgitation;

positioning the prosthesis in the coronary sinus while in the first configuration; and

reconfiguring the prosthesis into the second configuration.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for reducing mitral regurgitation, the apparatus comprising:

a flexible elongated body configured for introduction into the coronary sinus of a patient in the vicinity of the posterior leaflet of the mitral valve, said elongated body comprising a distal end section and a proximal end section, said elongated body being reconfigurable from a first configuration for delivery into the coronary sinus to a second configuration for exerting a force onto the posterior annulus; wherein

said distal end section comprises a rigid distal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped tube having proximally-extending barb means disposed within a length of said distal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue; and

said proximal end section comprises a rigid proximal end hollow and elongated cylindrically shaped tube having distally-extending barb means disposed within a length of said proximal end section and adapted to engage coronary sinus tissue; and

an intermediate section connecting said distal end section to said proximal end section, said intermediate section configured in an extended state to provide a first length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the first configuration and configured in a contracted state to provide a second length between said distal end section and said proximal end section in the second configuration, the second

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length being shorter than the first length, wherein said elongated body is reconfigured from the first configuration so as to urge said intermediate section toward the posterior annulus to exert a force on the posterior annulus and thereby reduce mitral regurgitation.